Sale of obsolete bogies in Visakhapatnam

†1940. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any incident of illegal sale of 12 obsolete bogies of the goods train in Visakhapatnam has come to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken against the culprits; and

(d) the concrete action taken by Government to prevent occurrence of such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The incharge of the concerned depot has been placed under suspension. The Central Bureau of Investigation, Visakhapatnam has taken over the case.

(d) To prevent recurrence, all concerned have been alerted to closely monitor all aspects of disposal of wagons.

Physically handicapped railway users

1941. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have not created any user friendly facilities for physically challenged and as a result they find it difficult to travel in trains; and;

(b) if so, the action taken to make physically handicapped user friendly railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Railway have planned to provide seven short term identified facilities at stations *viz* (i) standard ramp for barrier free entry, (ii) earmarking parking lots for vehicles used by disabled persons, (iii) non-slippery walkway, (iv) signages, (v) toilets, (vi) water taps suitable for needs

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

of handicapped persons & (vii) "May I Help You" Booth, to physically disabled persons. In the first instance all identified facilities have been provided to all 'A' category stations. Now railway has planned to provide these facilities at all 'B' category stations. Railways have also started providing second-class guard-cum-luggage (SLR) type coaches with disabled friendly features. These coaches have (i) wider doors than normal coaches to enable the disabled passenger to enter the coach while seated on the wheel chair, (ii) toilets which have been designed with sufficient space for a wheel chair borne passenger and (iii) wider passage in the corridor to allow for movement of wheel chair.

Manamadurai-Rameswarm and Manamadurai-Trichy stretch

1942. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the probable date of completion of Manamadurai-Rameswarm stretch on the one side and Trichy-Manamadurai stretch on the other which are long overdue;

(b) how the railway lines are proposed to cross across the sea between Pamban and Rameswarm; and

(c) whether there will be a new bridge across the sea or the existing Pamban bridge will be widened, modernized and strengthened for this purpose subject to technical stability and feasibility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) On Madurai-Rameshwarm (161 kms) gauge conversion project, Madurai-Manamadurai (48 kms) section has already been completed and work on Manamadurai-Mandapam section is targeted for completion during 2005-06. Line between Mandapam and Rameswarm is proposed to be converted to broad gauge. However, no time frame has been fixed for conversion of this section.

The existing bridge at Pamban between Mandapam and Rameswarm will be retained duly replacing/strengthening the existing Metre Gauge girders to suit Broad Gauge standard including Scherzer span.

On Tiruchchirappalli-Manamadurai (150 kms) gauge conversion project, work on Tiruchchirappalli-Pudukottai (52 kms) section is targeted for